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### Pauperism, Charities, and Relief Measures

*Causes of Dependency Based on a Survey of Oneida County.* By CHESTER LEE CARLISLE. *Eugenics and Social Welfare Bulletin* No. 15. (Albany: New York State Board of Charities, Bureau of Analysis and Investigation. 1918. Pp. 465.)

Because it is a community containing diverse industries and a charitable enterprise typical of "up-state" conditions in New York, Oneida County was selected for the survey whose results are given in this report. The author also believed that the data obtained would be typical as to causes of dependency and therefore of genuine value to the social worker.

The report is based on the study of certain children in the public schools and of dependent groups in the county, including children in institutions, mental defectives, epileptics, insane persons, delinquents, dependents due to acquired disease and to physical handicaps, and almshouse inmates. The study of the children is justified on the theory that the adult dependent shows a history of "deviation in symptomatic behavior" while yet a child; therefore potential failures may be recognized among children exhibiting similar deviations. The author states that in every case of dependency there are usually three causal factors: the precipitating cause; the contributing factors, such as habits, mannerisms of thought, and environmental pressure; and the ultimate casual factor, the influence of inherited qualities or peculiarities. The report practically assumes that mental abnormalities and peculiarities are the fundamental cause of dependency and as a consequence limits itself largely to a study of the mental history and conditions of the individuals examined. Again the groups studied were, with one exception, institution population including defectives, who in sociological literature are usually distinguished from dependents. Unless the reader has these limitations in mind he is in serious danger of misinterpreting the conclusions.

The actual studies indicate many interesting and valuable results. In the Utica Orphan Asylum 19.1 per cent of the children were found to be defective or subnormal; in the House of the Good Shepherd, 29 per cent. The delinquent children exhibited a high percentage of feeble-mindedness. The study of mental defectives indicates the persistence of bad heredity, while the attempt to discover the number of feeble-minded in the community yielded the threatening figure of one out of every 136 of the population. A considerable case analysis is made of epileptics, insane persons,

adult delinquents, and almshouse patients. The writer contends that the story of the poor is best read in the annals of cases of mental defect, affective deviation and other psychopathic forms of conduct; and that susceptibility to disease and premature constitutional breakdown are additional factors. Philanthropy must take these social defectives, meet their needs so far as possible, place them in an environment where they can battle successfully, and then give them enlightened after care. The reader, however, has the right to object at this point that the dependents in institutions are not typical of the great bulk of the poor but probably represent merely the lowest elements.

The two delimiting epochs of man's life are the prenatal and postnatal state. The small child is subject to countless influences and reacts accordingly. It is now possible to prognosticate the most prominent expected traits and trends, both physical and mental. Most of the cases in state institutions give evidence of capacity for transmitting abnormality and the dependent poor suffer from underlying organic weakness. The boy in the orphanage or the industrial school, and later in the jail or almshouse, is a similar type, whose behavior is determined by weakness and developmental defect. The subnormal individual drifts into an environment which matches his own defects of personality, and a standardized rating of homes and workplaces will express the mental rating of the individuals residing or working there. Even the sex offender can be explained by intelligence capacity defects or mental deviation.

The report suggests a number of constructive proposals. Since the main trends of personality are found in early life, each school child should be carefully examined, its needs should be mapped out, and then it should be trained and educated accordingly. In due time society will know what position each child can occupy and whether parental oversight will be necessary. In the second place, the community clinic should become an established institution with hospitals caring for the physically and mentally disordered and the vocational village for the socially handicapped.

This is a valuable analysis of the mental condition of various groups of dependents and throws light on the reasons for their dependency, but the title of the report gives the reader a rather erroneous notion of the nature of its contents. It is not an investigation of the causes of poverty; it does not even take for study a representative group of the dependent classes; nor can the

conclusions reached in respect to the groups studied be extended to the poor as a whole.

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NEW BOOKS

MOUNTS, L. H. *Dependents, defectives and delinquents in Iowa. A study of the sources of social infection.* University of Iowa Studies. Studies in the Social Sciences, vol. VII, no. 2. (Iowa City, Iowa: The University. 1919. Pp. 166. 85c.)

This monograph covers material relating to crime, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, indoor relief, tuberculosis, insanity and feeble-mindedness. It contains a large number of statistical tables derived from the information given in the various local and state public reports dealing with problems of social welfare. The author admits the unreliability of some of the statistics and a casual glance at the tables must lead the reader to similar conclusions. The tables, therefore, have a rather limited value and the deductions drawn are not entirely convincing.

A considerable part of the report is devoted to a study of the differences between urban and rural communities. According to the statistics, rural conditions are usually superior to those prevailing in the cities. In explaining the causes of these differences the author seemed somewhat handicapped. He concludes that the presence of a population of foreign parentage is not an important factor and that manufacturing industry has had little weight. His figures, however, indicate that mining and a mining population have seriously affected the rates of criminality and dependency. These conclusions are largely negative and leave much undiscovered. Additional analysis is necessary to discover the preventable causes of the relatively high rates of defectiveness, delinquency, and poverty in the urban centers. The influence of constructive social work is clearly apparent in some of the cities and indicates the usefulness of the social worker.

This monograph hardly realizes the aim expressed in the subtitle, and Iowans are not specially enlightened as to the particular conditions which should be removed. On the other hand they should become convinced as to the general inadequacy of the present statistical information in their state, to the carelessness or ignorance of local officials, and the varying policies among the different counties.

The subject-matter is presented in simple readable form save for the persistent intrusion after the general tables of a coefficient of correlation according to "Spearman's formula." Being the only attempt at technical statistics it savors somewhat of pedantry, while its practical advantages to most readers will be negligible. The monograph closes with a number of constructive suggestions.

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